

15 December 2005



FROM: Eduardo J. Ribas  
Director for Workforce Management

TO: NOAA Employees in the Washington, D.C.  
Metropolitan Area

SUBJECT: Emergency Closure and Dismissal Procedures for  
Employees in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area

This reminds you of the procedures for official notification of agency closings/dismissals due to emergency conditions, such as adverse weather (e.g., snow, severe icing, hurricanes, flooding, etc.), air pollution, disruption of power and/or water, interruption of public transportation, and other emergency situations. Closure procedures apply to non-emergency employees (including employees teleworking at an alternative worksite), in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area only (not outside the Capital Beltway). Emergency employees whose services are required during emergencies are expected to report to work. The following recaps the procedures:

**EMERGENCIES BEFORE THE WORK DAY BEGINS**

When an emergency occurs before the work day begins, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will make every effort to notify the local news media of the status of Federal operations by 6:00 a.m. You should stay tuned to local TV/radio stations for updated information. OPM will announce one of the following dismissal or closure procedures which apply to non-emergency employees in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area only (not outside the Capital Beltway):

**"Federal agencies are open; employees are expected to report to work on time."**

Employees are expected to report to work as scheduled.

Leave-approving officials may grant annual leave, accrued compensatory time, accrued credit hours (if on a flexible alternative work schedule), or leave without pay (LWOP) for employees who face hardships due to the emergency (e.g., delays or closures of schools, child care centers or elder care centers, damage to personal property requiring immediate attention, etc.).

**"Unscheduled Leave Policy; employees may take leave without prior approval."** Non-emergency employees may take annual leave or LWOP without prior approval of the leave-approving official, but they must inform their leave-approving official of their intentions.

**"Delayed Arrival Policy. Employees should plan to arrive for work no more than \_\_ hours (the announced number of hours) later than they would normally arrive."**

Employees should plan their commutes so that they arrive for work no more than the announced number of hours later than they would normally arrive. Employees who arrive for work more than the announced number of hours will be charged annual leave or leave without pay for the additional period of absence from work.

Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time.

For example, if a 2-hour delayed arrival is announced, workers who normally arrive at work at 7:00 a.m. should plan to arrive at 9:00 a.m.

**"Delayed Arrival/Unscheduled Leave Policy."**

Non-emergency employees may adjust their normal arrival time consistent with the OPM announcement and will not be charged leave for the period from normal arrival time at work until the delayed arrival time at work. Employees who arrive for work more than the announced number of hours later than their normal arrival time will be charged annual leave or leave without pay for the additional period of absence from work. Employees may take annual leave or LWOP without prior approval of the leave-approving official, but they must inform their leave-approving official of their intentions.

**"Federal agencies are closed."**

Non-emergency employees (including teleworking employees at an alternative work site) are excused from duty without loss of pay or charge to leave.

**EMERGENCIES DURING THE WORK DAY**

When an emergency occurs during normal work hours, you will be notified through the normal chain of command of an early dismissal as soon as the announcement is made. You may also monitor the OPM website for this information at: <http://www.opm.gov/status/>.

When an early dismissal is announced, employees will be dismissed relative to their normal departure times from work. For example, if a

3-hour adjusted work dismissal is announced, workers who leave at 5:00 p.m. are authorized to leave at 2:00 p.m.

Emergency employees are expected to remain at work.

**HOW LEAVE IS HANDLED WHEN AN EARLY DISMISSAL IS ANNOUNCED:**

**Employee is on duty.**

Non-emergency employees are granted excused absence for the remainder of the work day following their authorized time of dismissal even if they are scheduled to take leave later in the day.

**Employee leaves before official announcement of an adjusted work dismissal is made.**

Non-emergency employees are charged leave or absence without leave (AWOL), as appropriate, for the remainder of the work day.

**Employee leaves after official announcement but before the time set for his or her dismissal (with supervisory approval but not due to hardship).**

Non-emergency employees are charged leave for the period remaining before their time of dismissal and should be granted excused absence for the remainder of the work day following their time of dismissal, even if they are scheduled to take leave later in the work day.

**Employee is scheduled to return from leave after official announcement of an adjusted work dismissal is made.**

Non-emergency employees may return to work or shall continue to be charged leave until their dismissal time. Absence after the time of dismissal shall be charged as excused absence even if they are scheduled to take leave later in the workday.

**Employee is absent on previously approved leave (annual, sick, or LWOP) for the entire workday.**

Employees are charged leave for the entire work day.

**Employee is teleworking at an alternative worksite (including home).**

Employees are granted excused absence for the remainder of the workday following what would be the authorized time of dismissal.

**Employee fails to report for work.**

Employees are charged absence without leave (AWOL) or permitted to request annual leave, sick leave, or LWOP, as appropriate, for the entire work day.

**Excused absence.**

Supervisors may exempt employees from their authorized dismissal times and grant an earlier dismissal without charge to personal leave, but only to avoid hardships (e.g., early release or closure of schools, child care centers or elder care centers, damage to personal property requiring immediate attention, etc.). However, employees have no entitlement to excused absence.

Supervisors or managers should ensure delivery of this electronic message to their employees who do not have access to electronic mail.

For further information, please contact your servicing Workforce Management Office Representative  
([http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/contact\\_lists.html](http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/contact_lists.html))

---

This message was generated for the Director for Workforce Management by the NOAA Information Technology Center/Financial and Administrative Computing Division